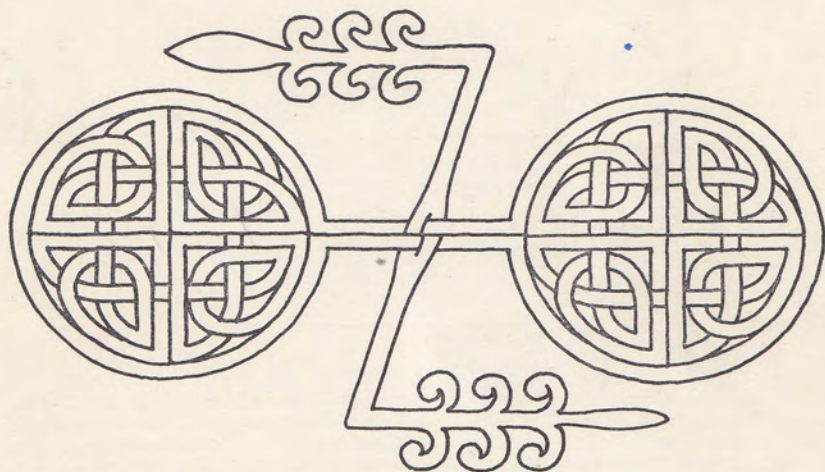


ASPECTS OF ANTIQUITY

A MISCELLANY BY MEMBERS OF THE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SECTION OF THE
ABERTAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



COLLECTED BY
ELISE M. WILSON, B.A.

DUNDEE
ABERTAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION No. 11
1966

The Abertay Historical Society

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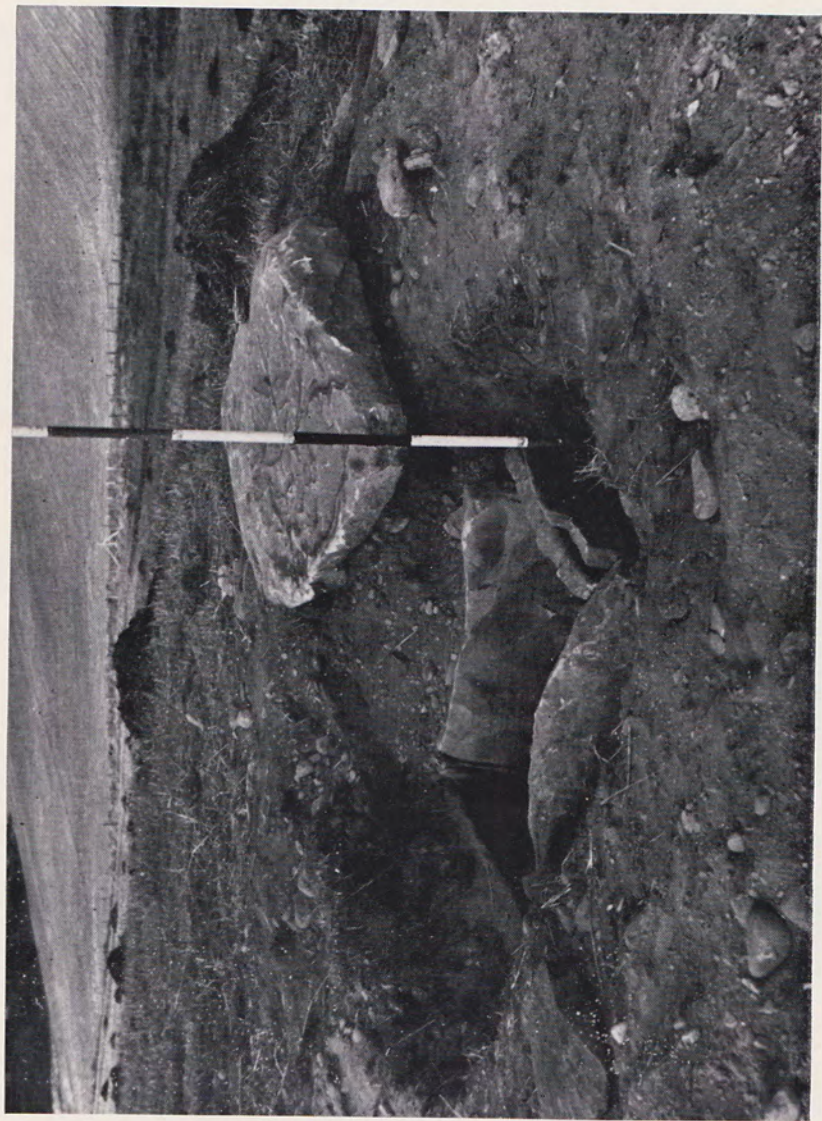
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Photograph by Cameron, Arbroath

SCULPTURED STONE, ARBIRLOT MANSE



SHORT CIST, GREENFORD, ARBIRLOT

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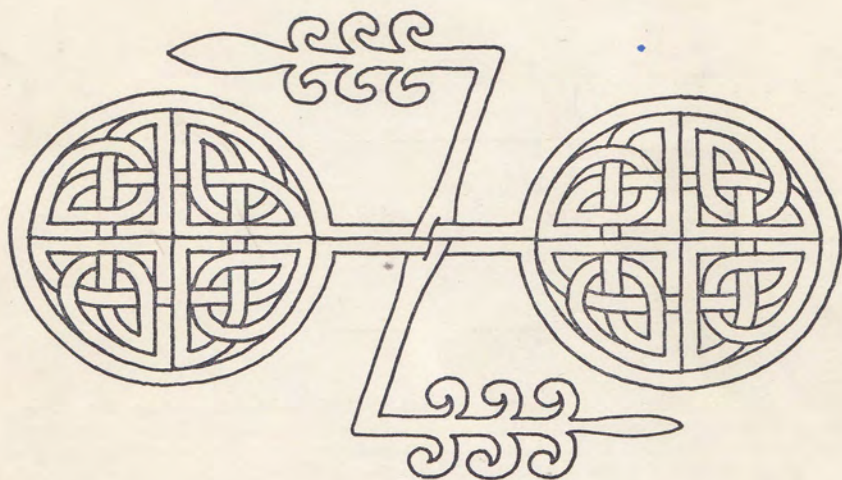
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The design for the illustration on the cover and title page, drawn by Gordon W. H. Mechan, is taken from the “Dronstan” stone, now in the museum at St. Vigeans.

General References

The following abbreviations are used for four works frequently cited in this publication.

O.S.A. – Sinclair (Sir John), *The Statistical Account of Scotland drawn up from the communications of the ministers of the different parishes*, 21 vols., Edinburgh, 1791-9.

N.S.A. – *The New Statistical Account of Scotland*, 15 vols., Edinburgh and London, 1845.

P.S.A.S. – *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1855 onwards.

Warden – Warden (Alexander J.), *Angus and Forfarshire*, 5 vols., Dundee, 1880-5.

Introduction

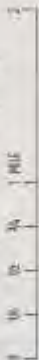
This Miscellany is a collection of studies undertaken by members of the Archaeological Section of the Abertay Historical Society. The section was formed some twelve years ago by those members of the Society who were particularly interested in archaeology, and from its earliest days it has been the policy to encourage members to undertake some form of archaeological research and to read papers at monthly meetings. Thus while the Section enjoys lectures from time to time by visiting experts on a variety of subjects, it never loses sight of matters of local interest, nor becomes merely a passive audience. It is hoped that other publications of archaeological interest can be produced from time to time as material is collected.

The Section is fortunate in the help and encouragement it receives from the parent Society and from the director and staff of the Dundee Museums and Art galleries who provide accommodation for meetings and facilities for showing slides. Thanks are also due to Mr. D.B. Taylor for his help and advice in the preparation of this publication and to Mr Cameron of Arbroath for the photographs of the Arbirlot stone.

E. M. W.

May, 1965

THE PARISH OF ARBIRLOT



SURVEY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE PARISH OF ARBIRLOT, ANGUS.

ELISE M. WILSON

The parish is a small one lying in the coastal belt between the parishes of Arbroath and Panbride, with the parishes of Carmyllie and St. Vigeans to the north. Where it runs down to the coast at Elliot the parish has its share of the low coastal plain, while to the north the land rises to the low hills which divide Strathmore from the coast. The Elliot river and its tributaries divide the parish with a series of deep dens. The Elliot is a considerable river; in dry weather it is a shallow, harmless-looking stream but in time of spate it can be a raging torrent and can cause considerable flooding. From time immemorial this system of streams has been the centre of population. All the sites to be mentioned are on the Elliot or its main tributary, the Rottenraw burn. The modern village of Arbirlot is on the river and has its bridge, its churches — one now disused — and its mill. This must surely have been the site of the mediaeval village. Moreover the mediaeval castle is only a short distance down the river.

The Old Statistical Account¹ mentions “the remains of a religious house” which may have been a “druidical temple” and a number of cairns which had already disappeared when the account was written. There are, however, a number of sites which can be recorded at the present time, details of which are set out below.

Greenford. Short1 Cist. NO/568404

In 1957 during ploughing operations a large stone was uncovered. When it was removed it was found to be the cap stone of a short cist. The site is in a field on the right of the farm road leading to the farm of Greenford, and to the south of the Greenford (or Rottenraw) bum. The cist was situated on the top of a low spur in the river terrace. The cist, which was built of large stone slabs, measured three feet one inch by two feet. It contained bones covered with a layer of fine silted sand. There was no sign of a beaker or food vessel. The cist was examined by Professor D. R. Dow of Queen’s College, Dundee, who removed the bones. The stones of the cist were later re-erected in the grounds of Queen’s College near the entrance to the Chapel.

Greenford. Fort. NO/560397

Also on the farm of Greenford, to the north of a small stream which divides the Greenford land from that of Balbinnie and on the edge of Boroughstane Moor, there is a small fortified enclosure. Douglas Hunter of Arbroath published a description of it in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*.² He describes it as oval, 370 feet in width at the widest with a ditch varying from 20 to 12 feet in width and 5 feet deep in places.

When visited in 1959 the site was something of a puzzle. The enclosure occupies the high ground above the burn. On the northeast side where the ground falls away, it is defended by one ditch running from the crest of the ridge to the bank of the burn. This ditch had been used as a cart track and had been widened and deepened in consequence. On the south-west side, where the ridge remained fairly level, three ditches ran down to the burnside. On the other hand, there was no sign of these ditches being joined on the almost level ground of the moor to the north-west, although there was some sign that this area may have been boggy. This may have been a mediaeval enclosure, particularly as Warden mentions a charter of about 1254 relating to Balbinnie.³

Kellyfield. The College. NO/592406

A cottage on the farm of Kellyfield was known by the name of “The College” and was by tradition the site of an early Christian church. A. B. Scott claims that it is the site of an early religious settlement of the type believed to have existed at Candida Casa at Whithorn and to have been directly connected with St. Ninian.⁴ In support of this theory he cites an early dedication to St. Ninian and the mention of a lay Ab of Arbirlot in the early charters of the Abbey of Arbroath, but it seems more likely that the name indicates lands held by a collegiate church. When visited in 1957 the cottage was in ruins and no signs of any earlier occupation could be distinguished. The cottage has since been demolished and the site levelled. On the six-inch Ordnance map the site is marked as Palace Green.

St. Ringan's (or Ninian's) Well. NO/594407

The spring which bears the name of St. Ringan's or Ninian's Well still exists on the south bank of the Rottenraw burn about a third of a mile downstream from the farm of Kellyfield. It is now covered by a derelict wind pump and is marked by “windpump” on the six-inch map.⁵

Parish Church. NO/602405

The present building was built in 1833 but there is every reason to believe that it is on the site of the earliest church in the parish. It is certainly the site of the mediaeval church in a typical position on a high spur above the Elliot water. It is stated that the early church was dedicated to St. Ninian and that it belonged to the Abbey of Arbroath; it is also said to have been in the diocese of St. Andrews. It was represented by an Ab or Abbe, who witnessed certain of the early charters of the Abbey of Arbroath. When the church was rebuilt in 1833 an early sculptured stone was found in the foundations.⁶

Parish Church. Communion Cups, Church Bell

There are in Arbirlot two other items of antiquarian if not archaeological interest. The communion cups of the parish church are of the beaker type and bear the inscription "Given to the Kirk of Arbirlot by Marion Douglas, Lady of Drum, Kelly and Cuthlie, 1633, and 1644". It is stated that, with the exception of that of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, they bear the oldest Scottish marks of any cups in Scotland.⁷ Ian Finlay states that they were made in Edinburgh "by Gilbert Kirkwood during Denniestoun's deaconate (1608-10) although dedicated for use only in 1633".⁸

Warden⁹ states that the bell of Arbirlot kirk is that removed from the old church of Navar soon after that parish was united with Lethnot and given by Lord Panmure to Arbirlot. It was founded in Rotterdam in 1655 and bears the inscription "Soli; Deo: Gloria: C. ovderocce. Fecit. Roterdam, 1655. Mr Fyfus, pastor, Naverensis, dono dedit".

Sculptured Stone. Manse. NO/602404

The sculptured stone found in the rebuilding of the church is probably the most important relic in the parish. It now stands in the garden of the Manse; a large block of whinstone five foot six inches long and two foot nine inches broad. Incised upon it are two crosses with expanded arms, one at each end of the stone, and between them two rectangular designs which have been identified as books. The lower of the "books" has a projection at one side which may represent a handle or an open clasp. Beside the upper "book" is a small circle which is described by John Stuart¹⁰ as a "paton" or host. A recent photograph shows two incised lines running down the middle and side of the stone which indicate additional design not previously noticed. Although the stone now

stands upright it may originally have lain flat as the cover of a tomb. The duplication of the design has been taken by some writers to indicate that this is a memorial to two churchmen, but this need not necessarily be so. The stone has been ascribed by Joseph Anderson and others to the early Christian period.¹¹

Kelly. Tower House. NO/608402

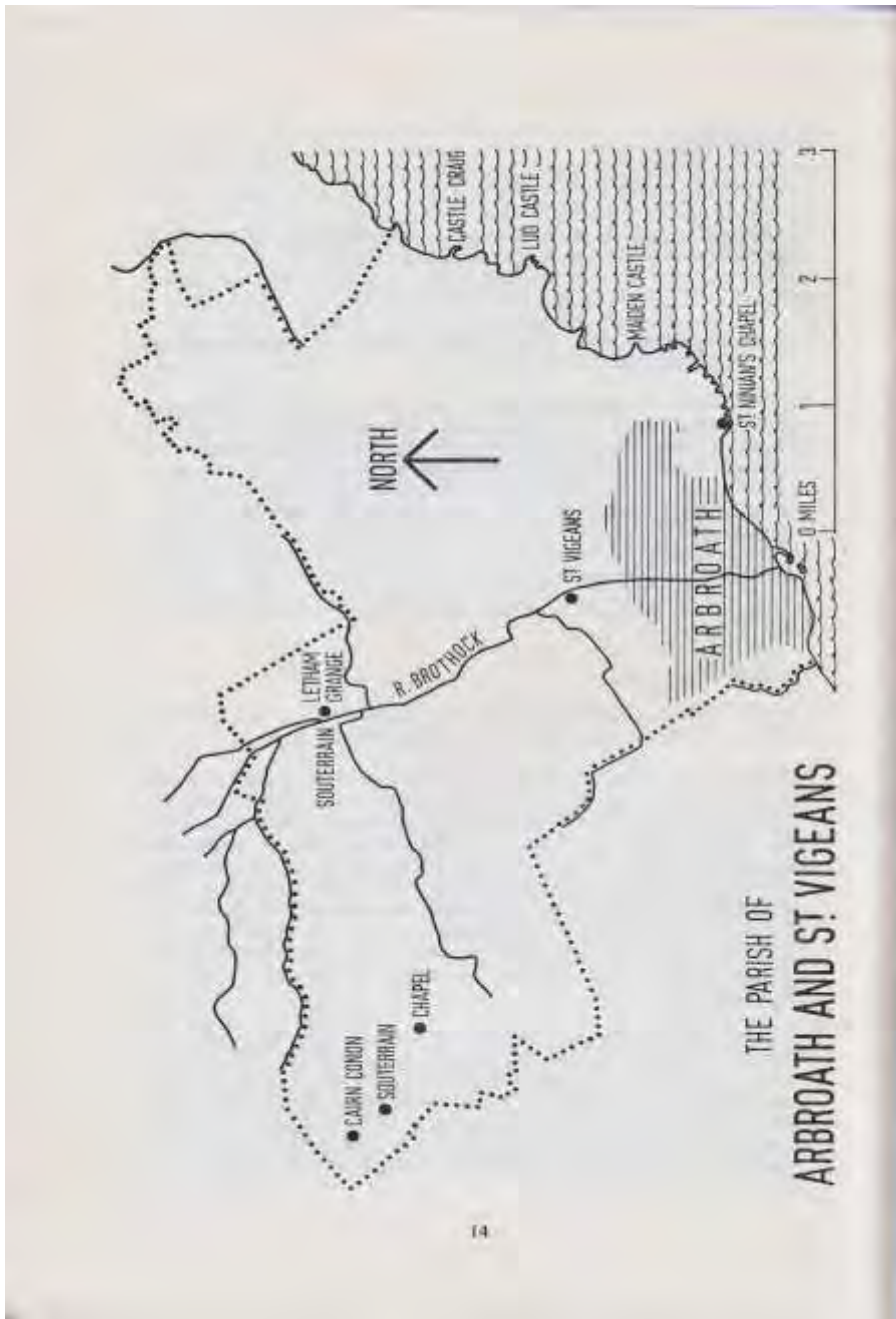
A short distance downstream from the village and on the opposite bank stands Kelly Castle. The present building is a tower house dated by MacGibbon and Ross to the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. It was allowed to fall into ruin and was replaced by a “modern mansion” but that house was also abandoned about 1855 and the tower house was restored and reoccupied. The estate is an old one, being mentioned in an Arbroath Abbey charter of 1208, but the present building seems to have been built in the fifteenth century. There must have been an earlier castle than the present one, but whether it was on the same site or not is not known. A large mound on the neighbouring farm of Balcathie may have been a motte. It was levelled in 1960 but no signs of artificial construction were observed. It appears to have been merely a glacial moraine.¹²

Peasihill Road. Cross Stone. NO/621398

At the first bend on the Peasihill farm road, after leaving the Arbroath-Dundee road, there used to be a drinking place for cattle. In the wall above the trough was a stone with a simple cross in a circle incised upon it. This may have indicated the boundary of the church lands of Arbirlot, but it seems more likely that it was an ordinary mediaeval boundary stone. The whole appearance of the area has been altered by the building of a factory and a railway siding and the cross stone disappeared some time ago.

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- ¹² Jervise, *Memorials*, *op cit.* in note 11, pp. 18*, 336, 485; Jervise, “Notices ...” *op. cit.* in note 5, pp. 449-50; *N.S.A.*, xi, p. 333; MacGibbon (David) and Ross (Thomas), *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland from the twelfth to the eighteenth century*, 5 vols. Edinburgh 1887-92. iii. p. 599; Simpson (William Douglas), *Scottish Castles: an introduction to the castles of Scotland*, Edinburgh 1959, p. 28; Warden, ii. pp. 366, 369-73.



THE PARISH OF
ARBROATH AND ST VIGEANS

SURVEY OF SOME ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE PARISH OF ST. VIGEANS

JOHN WILSON

The parish of St. Vigeans, excluding Arbroath, is one of the largest lowland parishes in Angus. It is bounded on the north and east by Inverkeillor and Carmyllie parishes, by the North Sea on the east and south, Arbroath and Arbirlot on the south and Arbroath and Carmyllie parishes on the west. Its length from east to west is eight miles and its breadth two to four miles. It is a very fertile parish and for this reason we would expect to find quite a few archaeological sites, which in the past have had their connections with the rich farm land. The principal sites are as follows: —

St. Vigeans Church. NO/638429

The church of St. Vigeans¹ is situated on the top of a mound close to the bank of the river Brothock at a point where that river receives a tributary on either bank. The hill has an artificial look and it is probable that it was a moraine hill which has been built up to contain the church. The origin of the church is doubtful, but it was probably founded by one of the early Christian missionaries from Ireland or Iona who came to Scotland in the sixth or seventh century. There is a tradition, however, that St. Vigean was a local saint and the foundations of a chapel reputed to be his are still to be seen at the Grange of Conon farm. There are no remains of the earliest church at St. Vigeans but traces of the Norman-style building which succeeded it may still be seen in the east gable of the north aisle and in some of the carved stones of the period which were found when the church was reconstructed in 1871. During this very extensive reconstruction and in the course of repeated alterations to the fabric of the church it was found that the twelfth century builders had used a quantity of fragments of sculptured stones, many of which bear Pictish symbols. Recently through the co-operation of the Kirk Session and the Ministry of Works, these fragments were removed from the church and housed in a cottage in the village. This is now a museum run by the Ministry of Works. The fragments that were discovered in the reconstruction of the church were fully described by a minister of the parish, Rev. William Duke.² There are also accounts of them by Romilly Allen³ and George Hay,⁴ and of earlier discoveries by John Stuart.⁵

The Church site of St. Ninian near Arbroath. NO/65941

The site of St. Ninian's chapel is situated near Whiting Ness where the

cliffs start to rise at the end of Victoria Park. Today there are no remains to be seen as the ground on which it stood is now a park. Coffins have been dug up in the field adjoining it, and when a road was built in 1778 remains of stone coffins were found.⁶

St. Vigean's Chapel, Grange of Conon. NO/583447

There are the remains of a chapel at Grange of Conon farm. Local tradition says that the chapel was dedicated to St. Vigean. The chapel is situated in an enclosure planted with trees and measures 42 feet by 22 feet over the walls. Within a few yards of the chapel there is a spring, now covered in, which is called St. Vigean's well.⁷

Cairn Conon. NO/569453

This site lies about four miles from Arbroath at the top of a hill on the old Arbroath-Forfar road. It is 600 feet above sea level. It is, as its name implies, in the form of a cairn but there is very little about it in the reference books. There is no doubt that the origin of Cairn Conon is very old. Warden⁸ says that on the hill of Cairn Conon once stood a building called Castle Greig and suggests that there was a royal residence here as Conon might be translated as Konig (King). The first known owner of Cairn Conon lands was Dusyth or Dufsyth and they were later acquired by the Abbey which held a court there.

The *Old Statistical Account*⁹ refers to "Castlegory or Castle-gregory" in this area. Today there are no remains of any castle but the word may be the Gaelic Caisteal and may signify fort. This could be the site of a dun or a burial cairn, but the remains are so scanty that it is impossible to be certain.

Souterrain at Letham Grange House. NO/623458

George Hay says "A 'Piet's house' at Letham-Grange, with the domestic vessels which were discovered in it, tells a similar tale — meagre, but not without interest — of the ancient race".¹⁰

With the help of Mr Stirling of Colliston it has been possible to pinpoint the exact position of this souterrain in the avenue of Letham Grange House. The late Dr. F. T. Wainwright has recorded the known details of this site.¹¹

Souterrain, West Grange of Conon. NO/573450

The souterrain on the farm of West Grange of Conon is situated in a field, five miles, north-west of Arbroath on the west side of the old Forfar Road. It occupies the south-east slope of the highest point of the field being about four or five hundred feet above sea level. The discovery of the souterrain was quite

accidental and arose from the lifting of a large stone during field operations in 1859. This exposed a round or bee-hive shaped chamber. An excavation was carried out in 1860 by Andrew Jervise.¹² This revealed the structure of the souterrain and yielded finds of pottery, animal bones and charcoal. In the course of the excavation a paved area, probably the floor of a hut, was uncovered and part of a bronze armlet was found in association with it. A number of stone coffins, evidently long cists, were also uncovered in the same field. The passage of the souterrain has now fallen in in places and a large stone has been placed for safety over the opening into the bee-hive chamber.¹³

Promontory forts

There are three known examples in the parish: — Maiden Castle, Lud Castle and Castle Craig.¹⁴

Maiden Castle. NO/670422

This is of the cut-off-promontory type, one and three-quarter miles east-north-east of Arbroath, at the end of Carlingheugh bay. It is a flat-topped promontory about eighty feet above the sea with precipitous cliffs all round except where it approaches the land on the north. Here the precipice is replaced by a steep grassy slope, which is separated from the land by a deep trench, above which towers a very high, wide rampart of earth rising twenty feet above the trench and fourteen feet above the interior.

Lud Castle. NO/681434

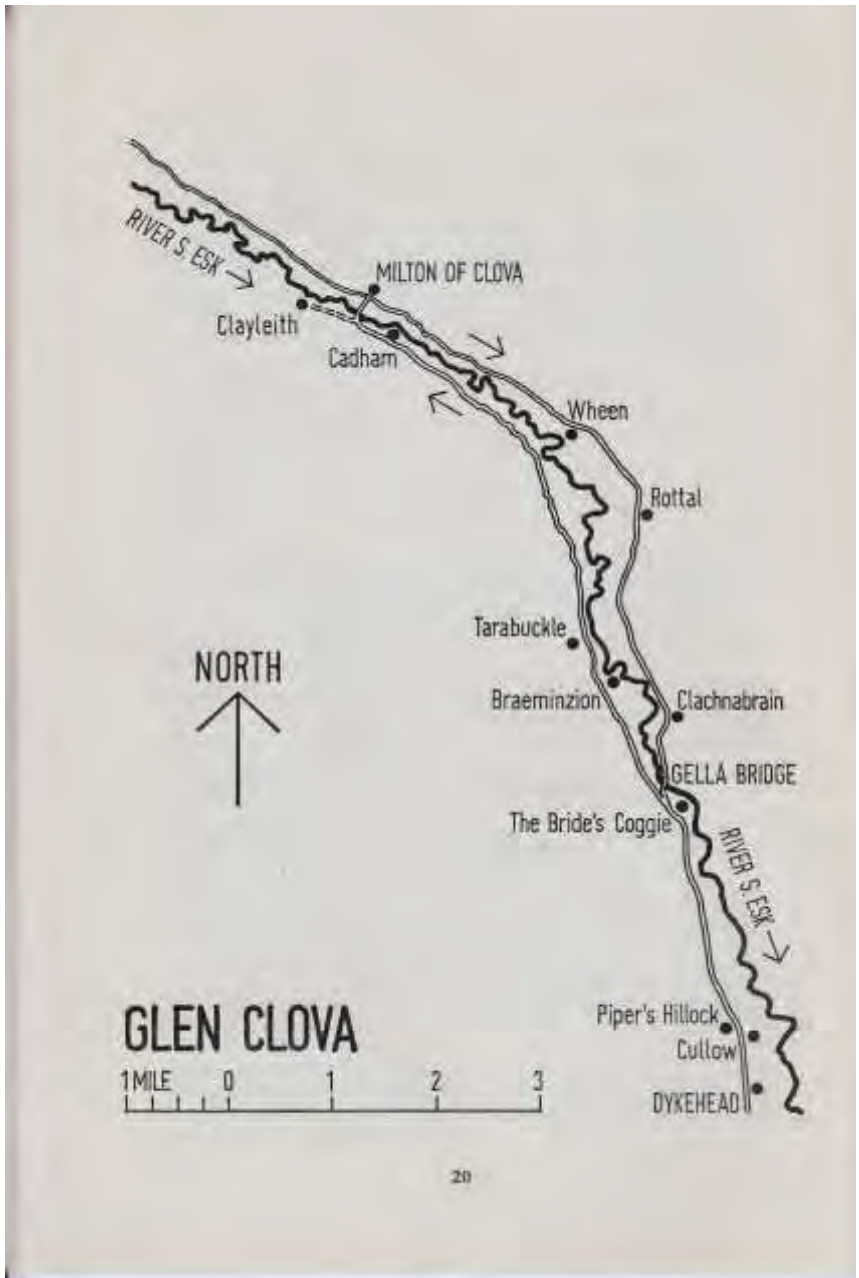
One and a quarter miles to the north-east of Maiden Castle and further along the coast is Lud Castle forming the south point of Castlesea bay. It is one hundred feet high with precipices on all sides except towards the land, where it has a straight grassy front which falls steeply to a height of forty to fifty feet and contracts to a narrow neck joining it to the mainland. This neck is precipitous on the north side and slopes steeply to the rocky seashore on the south. A much denuded rampart runs across the landward side of the promontory. In 1959 a stone spindle whorl was found here.

Castle Craig. NO/683442

Facing the village of Auchmithie, a few hundred yards to the south-east is a level-topped square promontory measuring about a hundred feet each side and one hundred feet high. Three sides are precipitous and the fourth is cut off from the mainland by a curved triple mound with two trenches. A third trench seems to have been destroyed by cultivation.

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- ² Duke (William), “Notice of the fabric of St. Vigean’s Church Forfarshire; with notice and photographs of early sculptured stones recently discovered there, &c.”, *P.S.A.S.*, ix, 1873, pp. 481-98. See also Duke (William), “Notice of a recumbent hogbacked monument, and proportions of sculptured slabs with symbols. Recently discovered at St Vigean’s Church, Forfarshire”, *P.S.A.S.*, xxii, 1888. Pp. 143-8.
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PLACE NAMES IN GLEN CLOVA

EDITH J. MARNIE

GLEN Clova is noted today as one of the loveliest of the Angus glens, those glens that run up into the fastnesses of the Grampians like fingers from the palm of a hand. It is famed for its botanical and ornithological interest, but it is also of great interest historically, and a little study of the etymology of its place-names gives us an insight into the life of the glen in past eras, that would otherwise be lost. The farm-names are, almost without exception, of Gaelic derivation, and have been so altered with the passing years that they now bear very little similarity to the originals. In many cases the spelling became phonetic and was eventually corrupted into similar-sounding English words with a totally different meaning. One case to illustrate this is Tarabuckle, or, as it is sometimes spelt, Tarrybuckle, which is really *TIR A' BHUACHAILLE* — the herd's land, and is a reminder of the days when the glen cattle were collected in the morning by a herdsman (*BO GILLE*), watched over during the day and returned to their respective farms in the evening, as indeed was done lately in the Outer Hebrides. A field on the farm of Kilburn, the farm adjoining Tarabuckle, was known as Drumbaigle which is probably the *DRUIM* or ridge of the herdsman, who chose a suitable eminence from which he could watch all the cattle.

The name of the glen, Clova, has never been satisfactorily explained. The Gaelic word *CLOBHA* (*Bh* in Gaelic is pronounced as *V*) means “a pair of tongs”, and while the glens of Prosen and Clova are like the legs of a pair of tongs with the handle running down towards Cortachy Manse, this derivation is perhaps too fanciful.

On entering the glen, the first farm is Cullow which is possibly derived from *CUL*, at the back of, and *UAMH*, a cave. There is a knoll here known as Piper's Hillock, with the familiar legend of a piper going into a cave playing his pipes, the sound gradually fading away into silence, and the piper never again seen. Such a legend points to the possibility of a cave or an underground dwelling, but despite a search over the hill nothing has been found and so far no mention of a cave has occurred in any books on this area. The road between the knoll and Cullow farm is not so very old, though it follows the route of an early drove road, and part of the hillock is used as a cemetery — the construction of either road or cemetery could have eliminated all traces of a cave or weem, the

existence of which may be perpetuated in the name Cullow.

A short distance up the glen we come to an interesting set of places which give us a picture of life in this area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. About the time of the '45 there were, according to an old book, sixty-six reekin' lums near Rottal. There was a tax on chimneys before the window tax, and a clachan was often described as so many reekin' lums. The only industry that could support such a number of families at that time was hand-loom weaving, so Rottal was probably a community of weavers. A nearby farm is called Clachnabrain which is *CLACH NAM MNATHAN*, pronounced *MRAN* as the *Th* is silent, "the stone of the women". When the cloth was woven it had to be well washed and beaten on a stone with wooden beetles or mells. Then the linen had to be bleached and the farm name of Braeminzion explains this perhaps. Braeminzion is pronounced *Bray-Ming-An* and again it could be *BRAIGH*, the summit or slope, and *MNATHAN*, the hillside of the women, and on these grassy slopes the linen had been spread to bleach. The names of two fields on Braeminzion are Easter Vanhaugh and Wester Vanhaugh, *Van* is really the Gaelic *BHAN*, and these are just the women's meadows. *Bhan* is the more usual form of the genitive plural.

With all this industry is linked the Bride's Coggie, a large circular marsh, stone-lined and now full of sphagnum moss. There are several explanations of the name — one, that a bride coming home from her honeymoon was catapulted into the marsh and drowned when the horse bolted and upset the gig; another, that this circle was sown with com and given as a dowry to a bride before the Repeal of the Corn Laws. A "coggie", of course, was a small tub or a bowl. But the Bride's Coggie was really a pond for retting flax — separating the fibres from the woody part of the stem, and stagnant water was the most suitable for this operation. All the way up the glen, at certain seasons can be seen the shadow and outline of these flax-retting ponds, and the level ground by the riverside must have been a lovely sight when the flax was in flower making a great blue floor to the glen. Headrick in his *General View of the Agriculture of Angus* (1813) mentions the cultivation of fields of lint.¹

Two places further up the glen are linked together by their names — they are Clayleith and Cadham. Near the Milton the road takes a sharp bend to the right, but if the grassy track straight up the glen is followed instead of the road, a rickle of stones can be seen in a spinney of trees, all that is left of the little farm of Clayleith. It was on this ground that a bronze age sword and two large spearheads were found several years ago, but the account of the find in the

Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland rather misses an interesting etymological point.² It states that the hoard was found on the Atton, which is certainly the nearest inhabited place, but it was really on Clayleith lands. Now the first syllable of Clayleith is *CLAIDHEAMH* — a sword. It is pronounced *Clay-V* or, as Sir Walter Scott wrote it, “glaive”.

It is wise in trying to trace a derivation to go back to the earliest spellings, as they are more likely to be nearer the original Gaelic. The spelling Claylek occurs in charters of 1585, 1586 and 1598; the form Clayleck is found in 1592 and 1599,³ while in a charter of 1642 the farm is called Clayleick and in one of 1687 it is Claylick.⁴ Obviously the second syllable is from *LEAC*, a flat stone, and there, I think we have the original meaning of the name “the sword of the flat stone”. It seems feasible that when the foundations of the wee house were dug, some time before 1585, a sword had been found and the name of the house had been chosen because of this. The interesting feature is that Cadham which is nearby is made up of *CATH* (pronounced *Ca* as the *Th* is silent) which means a battle, and *TOM* which is a knoll, the knoll of the battle. And there we have another picture of a happening in the glen, this time in a very much earlier period, when a battle had been fought round the knoll at Cadham and a fugitive had fled towards the head of the glen, hiding his booty, a sword and who knows what other weapons, under a flat stone. The other sword and spearheads having been found, possibly other hoards may some day be found in this area which would support this hypothesis.

Originally all farm fields had names, but with the advent of modern agriculture, and its system of numbering the fields, the old field names are no longer used, and in many cases are completely forgotten. Occasionally, however, one finds a farm where the field names have been kept through succeeding generations and some very interesting information can be brought to light. Such a farm was When. The origin of the name was unknown, but the very first field that was mentioned sounded promising. It was Chapelshade where there had been great quantities of stones before it was first cultivated — some stones so large they had to be blown up by gunpowder. Another field sounded like *Finneycreech* with the guttural *Ch*, which could easily be *FIONNE CRIOCH*, the boundary of the holy place, which seemed to be quite in accordance with Chapelshade. Another field almost adjoining (which according to Ainslie’s map of 1794 had a small farm on it⁵) was called Romans, which is from *RATH MANACH*, the monks’ rath, which agreed with the other two names. But When itself was still a mystery. However, on a map attributed

to Timothy Pont and Robert Gordon⁶, When is not marked, but in its place are the words *Heglish Macwhin*. Heglish is really the Gaelic *E AG LAIS* (similar to the French *eglise*) — a church. So far, so good. There *had* been a church there as the field names had hinted, but whose Church? Early Celtic and especially Pictish Churches took their names from their founders, that is to say, the Saint after whom they were called had actually been there, not like the Romish Church who dedicated its Churches to saints who had not necessarily been in Britain at all. But who was Macwhin? Was it the son of Whin? Or was it *MO whin*, for very often the prefix *MO*, my, was added to the saint's name as a term of endearment, so probably the Saint was someone whose name sounded like Cwhen.

In *The Pictish Nation, its people and its Church*, by the Rev. A. B. Scott,⁷ there is mention of St. Comgan or Comghan; pronounced *Co-an*. St. Comghan was a fugitive Pictish prince from Erin who came to Candida Casa. He was a colleague of St. Fillan and St. Maelrubha in the work of the Pictish church in Nechtan's reign and after teaching in the west he travelled alone eastwards spreading the Gospel and eventually became Ab of the Muinnter of Turriff about A.D. 734. A church bearing his name is still in Turriff, St. Coan's Church, and in 1650 there was a fair of St. Covan in the Garioch. It is probable, or at least possible, that he travelled from the west down the Tay valley and up to the mountains by Glen Clova, where he stayed for a while and founded his Church to which the people added the prefix *Mo* — a sign of endearment which, along with its being in the genitive case — *EAGLAIS MO CHOMGHAIN*, has the effect of slightly altering the pronunciation and making it like When. He may then have continued his journey northwards — possibly by Mount Keen which may also have perpetuated his name — to his final settlement in Turriff.

There are one or two other place-names in the Clova area which might have some bearing on his route up the Glen. On the map of 1794 by John Ainslie, Balwhingan is marked on the East side of the River South Esk, the same side as When but down nearer Cortachy. This could conceivably be *BAILE CHOMGHAIN*, the place of Comghan, with an additional suffix *An* which was often added, like the prefix *Mo* as a diminutive term of endearment. Not far from Balwhingan there is a hill, now called Con-lawer Hill, which was originally called Whanglather and was altered about 1822 for the sake of euphony. Both these names could be from *COMGHAIN LABHRADAIR* — the "oratory" of St. Comghan, a retreat to which he could go for meditation and prayer. It must be borne in mind that in Gaelic *CUING* means "a narrow place"

but that is not particularly applicable in either case. Other places which might be connected with St. Comghan and are within a mile or two of Balwhingan and Conlawer are Derachy, which might have affinity with *DEARTAIGHE* — an oak-built prayer-house,⁸ and Pinderachy, which is probably Ben-derachy, the hill of the oak prayer-house or oratory. There is also Ledenhendrie, which is perhaps *LEATHAD AN SHEAN DRAOIDH*—the slope of the ancient seer or orator, and there is also the Tegret Burn known locally as the Tiger which might be from *TEAGAIR*, which means a sanctuary.

These are mere possibilities, but while the path of place name etymology is fraught with pitfalls, it is best to follow every clue that might possibly lead to knowledge of the district that would otherwise be lost.

Thus a few place names can make the past of the Glen relive for us — from a Bronze Age battle, to the coming of the Evangel brought by a wandering Pictish prince, and to the comparatively recent community, who grew their flax, wove their linen, and took their “wobs” of cloth to the market in Kirriemuir.

References

¹ Quoted in Reid (Alan), *The Regularity of Kirriemuir*, Edinburgh, 1909, p. 104.

² Haddow (J. Muir), Boyd (J. D.) and Stevenson (R.B.K.), “Late bronze age weapons found at the Atton in Glen Clova”, P.S.A.S., xc, 1959, pp. 223-5.

³ *Registrum Episcopatus Brechinensis cui accedunt cartae quamplurimae originales*, 2 vols., Bannatyne Club, Aberdeen, 1856, ii, pp. 349, 356, 366, 376-7.

⁴ Warden, iii, pp. 119-120.

⁵ Ainslie (John) *Map of the County of Forfar or Shire of Angus from an actual survey*, 1794.

⁶ “Old Angus and Mearns, from drawings by Tim. Pont and R. Gordon c.1640. The outline corrected from modern authorities 1856”, *Registrum Episcopatus Brechinensis* , op. cit. in note 3, ii, frontspiece.

⁷ Scott (Archibald B.), *The Pictish Nation, its people and its church*, Edinburgh, 1918, pp.3, 123, 337, 347, 354, 393, 427, 507.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

JEAN AUCHTERLONIE, LADY GRANGE and THE CHURCH OF ST. RULE, MONIFIETH

AGNES HUTCHESON

NORTH of Monifieth stands the dignified white mansion known as “The Grange”. Built about 1812, it is the successor to a vanished castle, the home of the Durhams of Monifieth, the only obvious traces of which are the pillars of the old gateway standing in the shadow of two great yew trees. Sir William Durham was granted the lands of Grange by none other than King Robert the Bruce, in 1322, for faithful services as a knight,¹ and at the Grange the Durhams remained for 400 years.

One of the last of them was Jean Auchterlonie, who has three claims to local fame. In the first place, it was she who attempted to rescue the Marquis of Montrose from the soldiers who were taking him to his execution in Edinburgh. According to local legend, he was discovered hiding in one of the two great yew trees at the gate by a soldier who had not yet had his share of the wine so generously provided by Lady Jean who, when they were all arrested, declared that she was “heartily sorry [her plan] had not taken effect according to her wished desyre”. This confession saved her husband and servants from punishment, the laird giving security that his wife would appear before the Committee of Estates whenever she was called. Fortunately the gallant lady was never summoned to answer for her “treachery”.²

Lady Jean took a practical interest in Monifieth School, an ancient foundation first mentioned in the Records of the Kirk Session in 1599.³ The great difficulty was the schoolmaster’s salary. In 1600, the Kirk Session, believing that “the guid restan of the kirk and Common weill dois not litill depend fra the diligent upbringing of the youth in learninge and vertue”, ordained that the owners of “pleuchs”, i.e. “ploughs” — a measure of land — should each pay the schoolmaster forty shillings per plough per year, and the farmers should pay twenty shillings each and “sic as has no labouring to pay for everie bairnie” ten shillings. By 1617, this was not enough and it was decided that the schoolmaster should have at every baptism twa (two) shillings and at every marriage “fourtie pennies”. Again, the problem rose in 1619 when it was decided that the Laird of Grange, the minister, and “the rest of the parochie quha hes bairnes” should together provide for him.

It was on 13th June, 1645, that Lady Grange and her husband endowed the school with 2500 merks in gold and silver, producing annually £100 divided into £40 for the master, £20 each for two scholarships to be given preferably to boys with the name of Durham or of Grange, and £20 for the poor of the parish. Lady Jean's deed of mortification allowed the schoolmasters of Monifieth invariably to be graduates at a time when many parishes had no school. Indeed, for long enough, children in many Scottish schools learned their arithmetic from the book published in 1757 by William Craighead, dominie of Monifieth. Nevertheless, the problem remained, for about 1653 they were scraping the barrel again; all the 49 ploughs in the parish had each to pay two merks, the minister four, while the pupils had to pay according to their social standing. Fees were payable to the schoolmaster upon marriage, at baptisms and at funerals — especially those of “strangers who live without the parishe desyring the benefit of a buriall place in the kirkyard of Monifuithe”. In addition, pupils had to bring in the summer season, “Peets, coales or truffes . . . for the use of the Schoolmaster and bairnes in the winter sease”. Thus, in the seventeenth century was the schoolmaster paid.

But far more certain that her romantic failure to rescue Montrose and more lasting than her mortification to the school, was Lady Jean's gift to St. Rule's Parish Church of two silver communion chalices.⁴ One cup, dated 1638, consists of a plain shallow bowl like a champagne glass, supported on a high baluster stem which rests on a circular foot chased round the borders with flowers. On the bowl appears the arms of the Durhams, impaling those of Auchterlonie, and the statement that the cup was given to the Church of Monifieth. This cup was made in Edinburgh by the Deacon of the Silversmiths, John Scott. Such Communion Cups are peculiar to Scotland. Similar examples are to be found in Dairy, Ayrshire (1617); Fintray, Aberdeenshire (1633); and at Beith, Ayrshire (1631). The second cup is probably a copy of the first and was made in Dundee by Robert Gairdyne, 1642. The history of the cups is as fascinating as any detective story. When Lady Jane gave them to St. Rule's, the country was in the throes of civil war and the cups were, therefore, in 1645, put into the safekeeping of her son, the Laird of Ardownie, who, knowing their value, kept them so securely that not even the fulminations of Archbishop Sharp could persuade him to restore them to the church. It was the last Episcopal minister of St. Rule's, the Reverend John Dempster, 1676-1708, a remarkably stern man whose memorial is still to be seen near the pulpit in St. Rule's Church and who is reputed to have made the whole parish behave, who succeeded in

persuading the Laird to return “the things belonging to the Church of Monifieth”. Thereafter, the cups were regularly used at Communion from 1679 until the time came, so the story goes, when Lord Panmure decided that the cups would be a worthy addition to the collection of church silver belonging to the Duke of Sussex, the sixth son of King George III. Panmure requested the cups from the Rev. William Johnstone who flatly refused to part with them, saying “To give you these cups would be like allowing the vessels of the Lord to grace Belshazzar’s feast!” The next parish minister, the Rev. John Bisset, was content, however, to accept four new cups and meekly handed over the two old ones to his Lordship.

According to a memorandum by Mrs Jackson, wife of the Rev. William Jackson, Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, Panmure gave the cups to a Mrs Hunter (possibly, it has been suggested,⁵ the wife of Alexander Gibson Hunter, laird of Blackness, Dundee), who bequeathed them to her daughter Jane. Miss Jane Hunter gave one to Mrs Jackson as a wedding present in 1887. The other cup was sold to Lambert, jewellers and silversmiths, London, and by them to Lord Rosebery. Dr. Jackson and Lord Rosebery had agreed to bequeath the cups to the Museum of Scottish Antiquities in Edinburgh by the time that the Rev. Gordon Quig⁶ wrote to the two owners requesting their return. Rosebery, after some rather acrimonious correspondence in 1922, quite unexpectedly donated his cup to St. Rule’s and, encouraged by this, the congregation raised £75 to buy the other. Much to the surprise of everyone, a Mrs MacDonald of London, the widow of a grandson of Lord Panmure, repaid this sum to the congregation in memory of her husband. With the money was bought the new Communion Table on which stand the two old cups, now worth, according to a recent estimate, about £400 each — a price which would surprise and delight their original donor, Lady Jean Auchterlonie of Grange. However, their safe return to the Parish Church was not the end of the adventures of the cups, for more recently, thieves broke into the Manse, stole the cups and, probably realising the difficulty of disposing of them, threw them into the garden whence they were promptly rescued, much to the relief of the whole of Monifieth.

Although there is no memorial to Lady Jean, high in the east gable of the present church are some carved stones which, with two others now in the wall of the garage belonging to the lodge of Grange House, are all that remain of the once magnificent Durham memorial which was new when her Ladyship was young. It was erected on the north side of the “queer” of the old Kirk by Durham of Pitkerro who, in 1626, had given 300 merks to the poor of the parish

and was allowed to set up an elaborate monument under which he was later buried.⁷ He had been cashier to James VI and was knighted in Dundee by Charles II in 1651. He was so proud that ancestors of his of the same name had been given their land in Monifieth by Robert the Bruce that he had the fact noted on his great tomb. This monument was wantonly destroyed in 1812 when the old church was pulled down to make way for the present building. The stones that remain are said to be “war trophies” but are much too high in the gable to be examined.

What Lady Jean may have seen and puzzled her head over, was the queer old stone used as the lintel for the chancel door in the old pre-Reformation church. This, with two others discovered in the foundations of that church, was built into the wall of the present church. All three, with another found in a nearby cottage garden, are at present prominently displayed in the Museum of Scottish Antiquities. Each is elaborately carved with Pictish symbols on one side and on the other side, with the Cross and complicated designs in interlacing. All are broken, but one which had been a free-standing cross and is by far the most impressive of the four even though the top of it is missing, shows Our Lord on the Cross, curiously garbed in a very short robe which leaves room on either side of Him for a “Pictish priest”. Below them are two more priests in long robes, each possibly holding what may be a book in his hands: below them are two more Piets, this time in short garments — could they be soldiers? They seem to hold something in their hands, too; at the foot of the stone sits, as Monifieth people long believed, King David playing his harp. In Dundee Museum there is a plaster cast of this fascinating stone which seems to prove that more than a thousand years ago, God was worshipped in a little kirk in Monifieth.

Those who worshipped in that little church were the Culdees and their followers, people who demand admiration for their fortitude in stubbornly refusing to be handed over by the Earls of Angus to the monks of Arbroath. Of the far-off Synod of Whitby the Culdees may have heard, but they paid no more attention to decisions made in distant England than to a last will and testament made in Angus. The *Registrum Vetus de Aberbrothoc* and the *Registrum Nigrum* or *Recentus* of the same Abbey record that the Earls granted to the Abbey the Church of Monifieth with its chapels, its lands, its tithes and all other services and with common pasturage and other privileges justly belonging to the aforesaid church. The Celtic Church had been abolished in 664 A.D. by the Synod of Whitby but had been restored in Scotland by Kenneth Macalpin about

844 A.D. It was still fighting for its life in Monifieth about 1242.

Matilda, a widow, was then Countess of Angus and she again granted to Arbroath Abbey in that year, the whole land to the south of the Church which, she says, “the Culdees had in my father’s time”. That is, the church and lands of Monifieth had been repeatedly granted to Arbroath, but were still in the hands of the Culdees in 1242. They did not easily give up the place which had come into their hands about 844. It is very curious that the Countess Matilda should mention land to the *south* of the Church, because at the present time there is only a narrow strip of land between the sea and the church, which is very sandy and of little agricultural value. It is believed that the Ladybank was named after a chapel dedicated to Our Lady, which once stood on the sandbank. In addition, when the new church was built in 1812, rich black soil was found ten feet below the surface. Similar soil was found when the excavations were made for the construction of the Seven Arches, the railway bridge crossing the Dichty on the Dundee-Forfar line. These facts considered together suggest that perhaps seven or eight hundred years ago there was no Monifieth Bay and that perhaps the valuable black soil stretched on the surface of the land south of the church and that, therefore, the gift to the Abbey of Monifieth Church with its toft and croft was no mean gift.

References

¹ Malcolm (John), *The Parish of Monifieth in ancient and modern times with a history of the landed estates and lives of eminent men*, Edinburgh and London, 1910, p.335.

² *Memorie of the Somervilles; being a history of the baronial house of Somerville by James, eleventh Lord Somerville*, 2 vols., Edinburgh, 1815, pp. 433-5.

³ The account given here of Lady Grange’s connection with Monifieth school is derived from the chapter “Schools and Teachers” in Malcolm, *op. cit.* in Note 1, pp. 170-87.

⁴ Quig (Gordon), *The romantic adventures of two old Monifieth Communion Cups*, Dundee, 1938.

⁵ By Quig, *op. cit.*

⁶ Minister of Monifieth, 1921-43, author of the booklet cited in note 4 above. His report of the history of the cups after they fell into Panmure’s hands is probably to be preferred to the alternative version (given in Malcolm, *op. cit.* in note 1, p.89) that Panmure gave the cups to the Duke of Sussex, and that they were lost trace of when the Sussex Collection was dispersed.

⁷ Malcolm, *op. cit.* p. 343.



CATERMILLY

Parish boundary before the Union of 1758 ————

Parish boundary after 1758 ······



CATERMILLY: A LOST ROMAN FORT NEAR INVERGOWRIE?

with notes on two recent finds of Roman coins

GORDON W. H. MECHAN

IN the carse of Gowry and parish of Liff, two miles to the westward of the town of Dundee, and about half a mile benorth the estuary of Tay, is a Roman camp about two hundred yards square, fortified with a high rampart and a spacious ditch; but as the southern side appears to have been fenced with triple ramparts and ditches, these I take to have been the northern fortifications of the praetorium: the other sides being demolished by the plow, the vestigia appear but faintly. However, they are sufficient to shew that this fortress was of a parallelogram form, about a quarter of a mile in length, which, from its vicinity to the frith of Tay, I take to have been one of the camps which occasionally contained both the land and sea forces.

— Maitland's *History of Scotland*.¹

Two centuries later the plough has completed its destruction, and no visible trace remains. This article is an attempt to rediscover the site of this earthwork from the evidence of the few written references. The Rev. James S. McEwen, who was lately minister of Invergowrie, made a study of the Catermilly problem, and the writer is fortunate in having had his manuscript notes to refer to. With these, many false trails were avoided and lines of thought suggested, although the conclusion reached differs from that reached by Mr McEwen.

Maitland's description of the earthwork has been held to be self-contradictory: Crawford, in his *Roman Scotland*, quotes Maitland but omits the words "these I take to have been the northern fortifications of the praetorium": as a result he applies both descriptions — "about two hundred yards square" and "of a parallelogram form, about a quarter of a mile in length" — to the same enclosure, and finds the account "ambiguous and inconsistent".²

Mr McEwen suggests³ that Maitland, having reconstructed the "praetorium" from the triple ramparts and "faint vestigia", then postulated an extension of the square to enclose it, the extended square being the quarter-mile parallelogram referred to; but later descriptions confirm that the square was complete in itself, and it follows that the "praetorium" was either an annexe or an adjacent enclosure. "The other sides . . . demolished by the plow" cannot belong to the

square, for that leads to Crawford's paradox; they must belong to the "praetorium".

In Maitland's final sentence "this fortress" might refer to the "praetorium", but "one of the camps which occasionally contained both the land and the sea forces" can scarcely do so, for Maitland would have regarded a "praetorium" as a subsidiary enclosure to the square. "This fortress", therefore, refers to the combined square and "praetorium", together a quarter-mile in length. The term "parallelogram" as used here by Maitland evidently means rectangle; earlier writers used such terms as "equilateral quadrangle" and "oblong square" without the modern regard for precise geometric meaning. It may be doubted if an enclosure measuring roughly 700 feet by 600 feet, outside a Roman fort, could have been regarded as the praetorium or Commandant's house; but a supposed Roman site at Fordoun, now recognised as mediaeval, was described as a "praetorium" by several early writers, and was stated by Knox to lie outside the associated camp.⁴

We are left with two questions. First, was Maitland right in describing this as Roman work? Second, where exactly was the site? The first question must remain a subject of conjecture until the second is answered, but a few observations may be made. Neither the square, about 8 acres in area, nor the "praetorium", about 10 acres — nor, for that matter, the two together — is large enough to fit into any of the main categories of Roman marching camp in Scotland; but the size, the relationship of the two enclosures, the comparative strengths of their ramparts — for the survival of the high rampart to Maitland's day implies that it was originally the stronger — all these suggest a fort and annexe on the pattern of Ardoch; even the triple ramparts find a parallel in the multiple ramparts which represent different periods of occupation at Ardoch; there the annexe may have been a labour-camp for the fort's builders.⁵

A Roman fort in this area is not improbable if we consider the need for an advanced base for the landing of sea-borne supplies for the Strathmore forts: 11 miles to the north is the fort at Cardean, astride the Roman road which ran north-east from Bertha, past Cargill, and on by way of the missing fort at Shielhill, to Stracathro, and the sea near Stonehaven. Invergowrie bay is now heavily silted up, but it has not always been so. Philip writes that in the eighteenth century "coal was landed at the burn-mouth of Invergowrie. And people still living remember seeing barges load and unload there."⁶ The burn-mouth would have made a useful port in Roman times.

So much is speculation, but when we come to the question of the exact site we are on firmer ground. Maitland's account gives a fairly definite position, but there are reasons for treating this with caution. The one fact on which all accounts agree is that the site was in the parish of Liff, and I hope to show that if these accounts are read in the light of the early maps of the district, paying particular attention to changes in the parish boundaries in the 18th century, the search can be narrowed considerably.

At some time between 1574 and 1613 the parishes of Logie and Invergowrie were merged simultaneously with that of Liff. Invergowrie parish had lain on both sides of the Invergowrie Burn, which then formed the county boundary of Perth and Angus, the lands of Dargie, on which stood the parish kirk, being on the right bank.⁷ After the merger the county boundary was apparently moved west to include the combined parish in Angus, for it is shown thus on the map by Robert Edwards, dated 1678.⁸ The new boundary ran from a point on the shore a little to the west of the present village of Kingoodie, N.N.W. for a third of a mile, then curved in a wide arc eastward⁹ and ran E.N.E. to meet the Invergowrie Burn just downstream from the farm of Bullion. This was the boundary between Longforgan and Liff parishes in 1757, when Maitland's *History of Scotland* was published. In it he makes the earliest known reference to the site, quoted in full at the beginning of this article: "In the carse of Gowry and parish of Liff, two miles to the westward of the town of Dundee and about half a mile benorth the Estuary of Tay, is a Roman camp....."

In the following year, 1758, the parish of Liff was again enlarged, this time by union with Benvie.¹⁰ This left a salient of Longforgan thrust into the west boundary of the new combined parish, and a further adjustment of the parish and county boundary was therefore made, as shown on Ainslie's map dated 1794.¹¹ The revised boundary followed the Invergowrie Burn upstream almost as far as Bullion farm, then ran south, west, and north again, to include an irregularly shaped area about half a mile square, on the right bank of the burn, in the combined parish of Liff and Benvie. This has remained the boundary, with some minor variation, to the present day. By working backwards from the original Ordnance Survey map of 1867,¹² the earlier maps, all of which are to a small scale and distorted to varying degrees, can be reconstructed accurately enough to determine the early boundaries.

In the same year as Ainslie's map, the *Statistical Account of the United Parishes of Liff and Benvie* was published. The writer, the Rev. Thomas Constable, paraphrased Maitland's description and added: "There were very obvious traces of the camp remaining a few years ago, which the plough has since entirely effaced. The spot, however, is still distinguished, being known by the name of Catter Milley . . ." ¹³ Three years later, in 1797, the author of the *Statistical Account of the Parish*

of Longforgan, identified only as “a proprietor in the Parish, a Friend to Statistical Inquiries”, wrote: “Upon the eastern boundary of this parish, but now in the parish of Benvie” — by which is meant the United Parishes of Liff and Benvie — “is the remains of a fort, or fortified camp, evidently Roman, from its square shape, and its name Catter Mellie.....”¹⁴

We cannot tell if either author of these partly contradictory accounts had really seen the remains before they were effaced; possibly they were interpreting Maitland in different ways; in any event, as local men, both knew where the remains were or had been, and this earliest application of the name Catermilly is valuable in identifying the site.

The name is first recorded in a charter before 1292 as Kether-malyn, and appears again as Katermalyn in 1447, as “Bulzeon alias Katermalyn” in 1553, as “Bulzion or Catermille” in 1644, and as “Bulzeon or Catermille” in 1694.¹⁵ Dr. Philip cites¹⁶ a document dated 1617 which shows that part at least of these lands were in the barony of Longforgan at that time, and Mr McEwen suggests that they would therefore have been in the *parish* of Longforgan; however, the 1644 reference puts part of the same lands in the barony of Melgund. It appears that no inference can be drawn as to the parish in which they lay.

The name was “explained” by various writers as being derived from the Latin *quatuor millia* — the “Camp of the Four Thousand” — and spurious local “traditions” were invoked to support this; this explanation in fact originated with Principal Playfair of Edinburgh University, mathematician and astronomer, who lived 1748-1819 and was the son of a minister of Benvie, in which manse he was born; his interpretation was published by Knox,¹⁷ and repeated by subsequent writers. The first element is fairly certainly Gaelic *cahair*, a fort.¹⁸ The second element, it has been suggested, may be from Melin or Malan, who is said to have given his name to Leckmelm (1548 Lachmaline).¹⁹ Malan is said to have flung a stone, Gaelic *leac*, across Loch Broom, and this stone is the Leac Mailm which gives the place its name. By coincidence, near the boundary of the lands of Catermilly lies the Paddock Stane, a large erratic, said to have been flung across the Tay by the Devil.²⁰ Watson derives the second element from Gaelic *mile* or *mileadh*, warrior(s),²¹ but possibly the derivation is from Gaelic *meallan*, knolls or hillocks. This gains support from one derivation of Bullion (1509 Bulyeon) from Gaelic *builgean*, blister or pimple,²² although Watson interprets it as “John’s fold”.²³ It is possible that the knolls or pimples refer to the grass-grown foundations of buildings within the ramparts.

The farm of Bullion lay, and still lies, on the right bank of the Invergowrie Burn, as shown on Edwards’s and Ainslie’s maps. According to Stuart, “The lands on the south and west of the Feus” — that is Mylnefield Feus, the present main street of

Invergowrie – “form the farms of Bullion and Mylnefield. They formerly were the property of the same family, and Bullion was then called also Catermillie; but since the division of the property one field on Mylnefield farm bears this name . . . The fosse and other vestiges of fortification have been swept away by agricultural improvement, and the memory of it is preserved only in history, and the ground plan of the estate.”²⁴ It has not been possible to trace this map, and with further subdivision and changes of ownership of both Bullion and Mylnefield farms, the memory of the site has also been lost.

Other writers have no facts to add. Keltie²⁵ abridges Maitland’s description, while Philip, Elliot²⁶ and Roger²⁷ base their accounts on those of previous writers. *The New Statistical Account of the United Parishes of Liff and Benvie* refers to Maitland, and states that no trace remains;²⁸ that for Longforgan parish merely refers the reader to the *O.S.A.*²⁹

Knox’s map published with his *Topography of the Basin of the Tay* in 1831 shows a Roman camp on top of Menzieshill. As drawn, it is completely out of scale, the sides measuring about 2,000 feet, and as all traces had vanished by Knox’s day it is clear that the camp plan is symbolic only, and that he arrived at this position by following Maitland’s distances — two miles west of Dundee and half a mile north of the Tay; but Maitland’s distances are sometimes inaccurate, and we do not know from what point his two miles are measured. Was it from the Mercat Cross, or from the boundary stone which until 1812 lay outside the town wall, near the West Port,³⁰ or even from some unknown point on the Perth Road, representing the extent of Dundee’s growth in the mid-18th century? In any case the figure is qualified by the location in Liff parish, and contradicted on two counts by the *O.S.A.* of Longforgan, which locates the site “upon the eastern boundary of this parish”, and about three miles from the native fort on Dron Hill.³¹ This would put the distance from Dundee at three and a half miles, on the lowest estimate. On general grounds Knox’s site is improbable: hilltops were not normally chosen for marching camps or forts. Where possible, sites were selected which had the protection of one, or better still two rivers: Cardean is a classic example of this — both the fort and the camp lie on the ridge of high ground between the Isla and its tributary, the Dean. If we seek such a site in the district we need look no farther than the land on the right bank of the Invergowrie Bum, between the burn and the Tay estuary.

We can now assemble the following facts about the site, disregarding the distances given by Maitland and the *O.S.A.*:

1. It was in Liff parish before the union with Benvie in 1758;
2. It was still in the United Parishes of Liff and Benvie, after the boundary changes which followed the union;

3. It lay on or near the boundary with Longforgan, after the changes;
4. Part or all of it was cultivated ground when Maitland wrote, in 1757, and all of it by 1794; it was therefore outside the wooded or parkland areas shown on Ainslie's map;
5. It was known as Catter Mellie or Catter Milley, and therefore lay in the lands of Bullion, to the south and west of Mylnefield Feus, possibly on the present farm of Mylnefield.

One area fulfils all these conditions. By superimposing the parish boundaries on Edward's and Ainslie's maps we see that part of the lands of Bullion was always in Liff parish, and outside the park of Mylnefield as shown by Ainslie. This area also fits the distance, given by the *O.S.A.* of Longforgan, of three miles from Dron Hill fort.

An air photograph taken in December, 1949, shows, on the western edge of this area, what may be the typically rounded angle of a Roman rampart. It is on the west side of the lane from Bullion- field filling station to Mylnefield farm, and about 500 feet from the Dundee-Perth road. If the two arms of the angle are produced to form the sides of a square 600 feet by 600 feet, with its axis N.N.E.- S.S.W., then the south corner will lie approximately on the crest of the high ground north of Kingoodie. It may be significant that the lane referred to passes through two sides of the square at approximately their mid points, where gaps for entrances would be expected, and that a slight change of direction, for no apparent reason, occurs at one of these points. This would have been an ideal site for a Roman fort, with natural protection by the Tay on the south and the Invergowrie Burn on the east and north, good drainage, a nearby water supply, and sufficient elevation above the marshy lands of the carse to afford a view of the estuary and approaching ships.

Until excavation or chance discovery proves the matter one way or the other, this seems the most likely candidate for the site, and the best place to end this investigation.

In March, 1962, Mr W. Parr, of "Rosella", Park Road, Invergowrie, found a Roman copper coin at a depth of three feet when digging the garden of his new house, immediately south of the park, and about half a mile E.S.E. of the site suggested above for Cater- milly (grid ref. NO/348300). The coin, which is in good condition, has been identified by the Dundee Museum as a *follis* of Maximinus II (Maximinus Daza), 308-314 A.D., minted at Alexandria in Egypt.

A few years ago, a Roman copper coin in good condition was picked up at Kingoodie, on the shore of the little bay immediately to the east of the old piers (grid ref. NO/343294). The Dundee Museum has identified this as a debased *tetradrachma* of Maximianus I, Hercules, 286-310 A.D., also minted at Alexandria.

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- ⁹ So far, this is represented by existing field boundaries to the south of Mylnefield House.
- ¹⁰ *O.S.A.*, xiii, p.101, Dalgetty, *op. cit.* In note 7, p.18, relates that the decret of union had been made in 1753, but was not carried out until the death of the minister of Benvie.
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- ²⁰ Story related by Dalgetty, *op. cit.* in note 7, p.70, and others.
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- ²⁸ *N.S.A.*, xi, p. 579.
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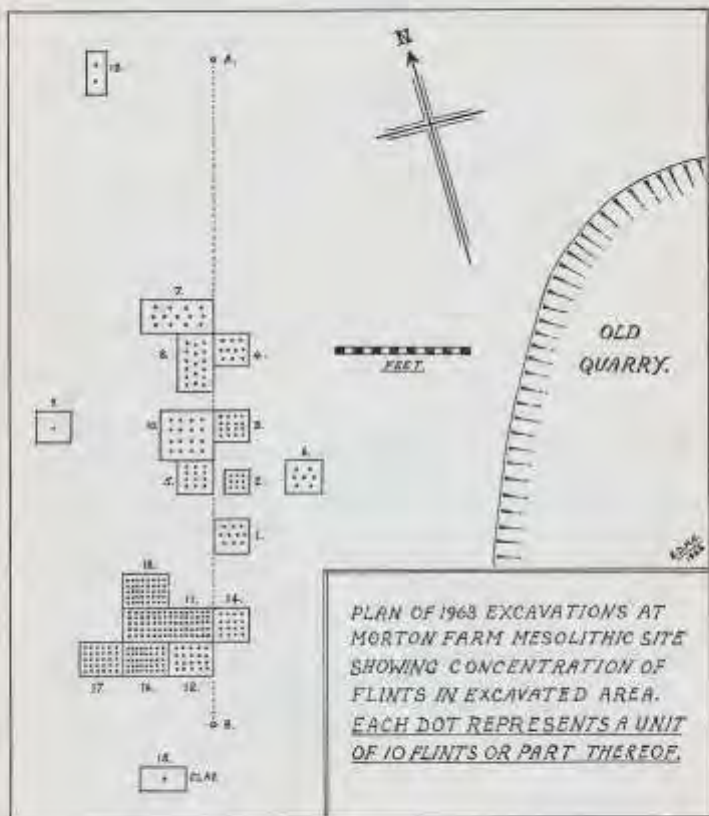


FIG. 1

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS OF A MESOLITHIC SITE AT MORTON FARM, TENTSMUIR

R. D. M. CANDOW

Introduction and Discovery

THE Mesolithic period (Middle Stone Age) can at present be given only an approximate date of somewhere between 10,000-3,000 B.C. At the beginning of the Mesolithic, the British Isles were still joined to the Continent, and the North Sea area was a series of large lakes and swamps. Only later, around 6,000 B.C., did Britain become an island proper. To the far north, the great ice-fields of the last Ice Age were slowly, yet steadily, retreating, and forests replaced what had been barren wastes. With the forests came red deer, aurochs, wild pigs, wolves and bears. Following the game from the south was Mesolithic man the hunter. Three different streams of Mesolithic folk migrated to Britain; Magle-mosians from north Germany and Denmark, Azilians from south France, and Tardenoisians from north France. The cultural name of each of these different Mesolithic groups is derived from the location of its original discovery.

All three classes of the Mesolithic community in Britain were adept in the manufacture of microliths, the traditional hall-mark of Mesolithic cultures. The microlith or "pigmy flint" is usually about half an inch in size, and it served many purposes. At Teviec,¹ an island off Brittany, the skeletal remains of a Tardenoisian human had a small triangular microlith imbedded in part of the vertebrae. There are other examples like Teviec suggesting that microliths were mounted as arrow points or barbs in a wooden shaft. What of religion and ritual practices? Mesolithic peoples are known from time to time to have buried their dead covered in red ochre. The finding of animal remains deposited in lake beds beside the dwelling sites of Mesolithic tribes suggests that regular sacrificial offerings were made to the gods.

Mesolithic finds appear to be the earliest evidence of man's arrival in Scotland. In England, however, especially in the south, Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) man had long been on the scene. Both the east and west coasts of Scotland supported Mesolithic peoples. In the west, Azilian settlements have been found in caves near Oban, whilst on the east side, Tardenoisian artifacts have been found in the sand bunker areas. At Perth, the discovery of a dug-out canoe below the clays laid down by the Tay, seems to indicate that a party of Maglemosian fishermen paid a visit there as well. It is on one of the eastern sand bunker areas, at Tentsmuir, that the newly discovered Mesolithic site of Morton Farm is situated.

Tentsmuir lies in the north-east corner of Fife. Marking its northern and southern limits are the rivers Tay and Eden, whilst to the east, the North Sea breakers pound the Kinshaldy sands. In ancient times, the district was one vast stretch of sand bunkers and marshy moorland, and it still is in some places, but today most of the ground is cultivated. Forest plantations, farms, bird sanctuaries, an aerodrome and a golf course, being some of the present-day developments. For some time now, naturalists have made a careful study of the animal and bird life found on the moor, but the archaeology of the area has been neglected. Haphazard excavations and collecting in past years by antiquarians has made the study of Tentsmuir's prehistory chaotic. Recently, however, a new interest in Neolithic and Bronze Age settlements led archaeologists to make a proper examination of all the known prehistoric material from Tentsmuir deposited in museums and private collections. The archaeologists found plenty of Neolithic and Bronze Age remains to check over, but there was a lack of information regarding their location or find spot. Fortunately, a number of interested people have been able to help by giving detailed reports about recent finds made on Tentsmuir. It was during the exploration for further remains of the Neolithic-Bronze Age period that the Mesolithic site at Morton Farm was discovered in 1957.

Morton Farm lies in the north of Tentsmuir, and is 1½ miles from Tayport. The old F.N.E.R. railtrack separates the farm from the Morton Fochs in the west, and the busy Tayport to St. Michaels highway. Approximately 500 yards due south of the farm is an old quarry (NO/467256) and it is here on the quarry's west side, that the Mesolithic site at Morton is situated. The actual discovery was made in February, 1957, when the newly ploughed field surface round the quarry edge was being examined. Several Mesolithic type flint scrapers and microliths were found. Unfortunately the excavation of the site at

Morton was delayed for a variety of reasons. Finally, however, the way was clear enough for the first trial trenches to be dug at Morton in May, 1963.

The 1963 Excavations at Morton

During the five-month period of May-September, 1963, some 18 trenches were opened up and examined at Morton Farm Mesolithic site. The trenches, most of which measured 4x5 feet, and approximately feet deep, yielded 3,238 pieces of flint, and amongst this number of flints, 435 Mesolithic type implements were recognised. The trenches or squares were marked out along, or in some cases parallel to, a base line of 80 feet from point A to B (see plan, fig. 1). At the start of the excavations it was a matter of luck in pegging out a trench, for there was no way of knowing which particular spot would contain flints. Nos. 1-10 trenches were fairly rich in flints, an average total of 100 flints came from each trench. After No. 10 trench had been excavated, a new spot was chosen 20 feet further south, and immediately a richer concentration of flints was noticed, (see plan, fig. 1). An average of 300 flints came from each trench of the Nos. 11-18 group, and there were also more implements present.

The first 12 inches of sandy soil excavated had been disturbed by the plough, but below this level, the ground was undisturbed, and at 18 inches down, the sandy soil gave way to pure sand. The Mesolithic flints reached down 2 or 3 inches into the pure sand, and in some trenches the flints lay at a 30 inch level below ground surface. Digging a trench was slow work, for every spade-full of earth and sand had to be carefully riddled. Usually one person stood in a trench working with the spade while two others worked the riddle. Though progress was rather slow, results were most encouraging, and it was thrilling to watch flint artifacts appear in the riddle as the sandy soil was sieved through.

Long before the completion of the 1963 excavations, it had become obvious that the Mesolithic site at Morton Farm represented a major station of Mesolithic man. Apart from indicating occupation at Tentsmuir during Mesolithic times, the discovery helped to fill the gap in the distribution of Mesolithic sites on the Scottish east coast. Banchory in Aberdeenshire, and the Gullane Sands in East Lothian, are the nearest Mesolithic sites of any importance to Morton. It must be mentioned here that the presence of Mesolithic remains on Tentsmuir had been known before the Morton

discovery. A. D. Lacaille reported some unrecorded microliths from Tentsmuir in 1944,² but the exact location of these earlier finds was not known.

Description of the Flint Industry

As stated in the preceding section, 435 Mesolithic flint implements were found during the 1963 season at Morton Farm, and they represent a variety of colours. There are considerable amounts of the local Scottish red flint from Buchan and Angus, and the light brown and dark flint from south England is present as well. In all probability, the Mesolithic folk carried small quantities of flint when moving to new regions; this habit would ensure that they always had material to make tools and weapons. The type of flint industry represented at Morton seems to be Tardenoisian. Small geometric microliths discovered amongst the excavated flints indicate a typical Tardenoisian trait. Also, the choice of the sand covered area at Morton would be congenial to Tardenoisians. Nearly all the known sites where Tardenoisian remains are found are sandy or near sand areas. It is, however, difficult at this stage to be certain about culture characteristics, for apart from being a relatively small selection from what must be a large occupation site, the flints have yet to receive expert examination.

In fig. 2 a selection of the microliths is shown. Nos. 1-7 are clear examples of the isosceles triangle type of microlith from the geometric class. It would appear that the microliths illustrated in Nos. 1-4 were made by the same person; each has a slight upward kick along its worked edge.

Nos. 8-11 are probably triangular type microliths, but are not so sharp in outline.

Nos. 12-19 are non-geometric type microliths.

Nos. 20-22 are fine examples of micro-burins, the rejects from the operation in microlith manufacture.

Nos. 23-24 are obliquely-blunted point type microliths.

There is a notable absence of the obliquely-blunted microlith from the 1963 excavations. Yet surface searching after ploughing at the site yielded 30 or so obliquely-blunted type microliths. Perhaps this suggests that the particular spot where they were made has still to be

excavated. The fabrication of microliths³ shown in the bottom left hand corner of fig. 2 shows the different stages in the manufacture of a microlith from a blade struck off a flint core to the finished article. Fig. 3 shows some of the other Mesolithic flint implements from the site.

Nos. 1-11 are all scrapers, and Nos. 3, 4, 5, 7 and 10 have a continuous worked edge.

Nos. 12-17 are end-scrapers.

No. 18 is a flint core in the making.

Nos. 19-29 are blades, and No. 28 has its base end and part of one side worked.

No. 30 is a flake, but it is feasible that it could have served as an arrow-head.

No. 31 is a fine example of a borer.

Calcined Flints

Up till now, no mention has been made of burnt flint. However, in trench No. 11 a total of 35 pieces of burnt flint were found. This would seem to indicate that a fire site or hearth is somewhere nearby. No evidence of a hearth has come to light yet, but numerous particles of charcoal have been discovered in the trenches, and must surely mean that fires were made.

Conclusion and Acknowledgments

There is little doubt that the first season's explorations at Morton Farm Mesolithic site were a big success. Even the most optimistic of excavators could not have prophesied that such rich and interesting Mesolithic remains lay below the field surface at Morton. At present the flint tools found at Morton are regarded as belonging to people of Tardenoisian descent or contact who lived and hunted on Tentsmuir during the Mesolithic period. They are probably the earliest folk to be in the area, and any hearth sites or remains of dwellings discovered in future excavations will be the oldest human signs of living-quarters, not only locally, but also in central east Scotland. Many valuable lessons were learned during the 1963 excavations at Morton Farm. The initial trenches were plotted around the site at random, but now that part

of the general layout is known, future excavations can be planned more easily and thoroughly.

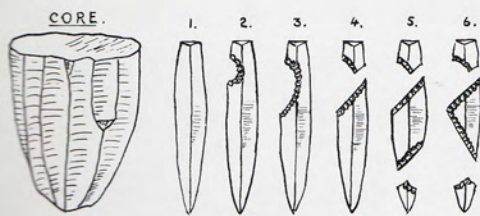
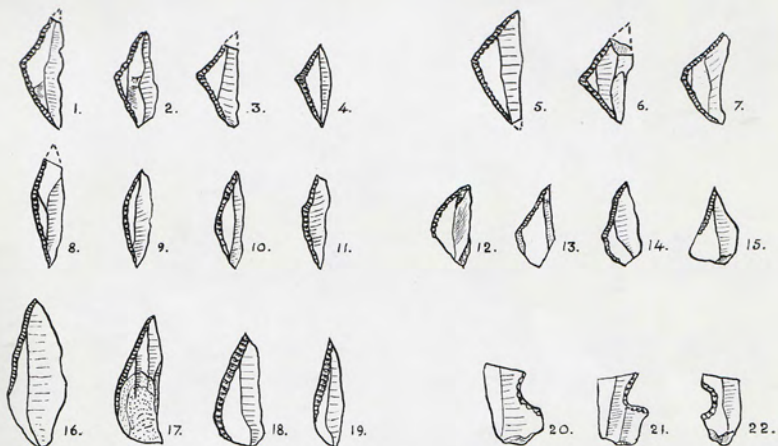
Before any full scale digging can commence at any archaeological site in this country, it is of course necessary to obtain permission from the owner of the land. The proprietor at Morton Farm is Mr Gordon Sim, and he was only too pleased to let the excavations take place. Mr Sim was most interested to learn all about the Mesolithic remains, and he paid many visits to the excavations. Mr Sim's intimate knowledge of the site area proved most valuable when deciding where to excavate.

Special thanks go to Mr James Boyd, the Director of the Dundee Central Museum, and his colleagues who helped in the investigation work. Not long after the opening of the first trenches at Morton, Mr Boyd was informed of the rich Mesolithic material there, and it was jointly decided to co-operate in the exploration of the site. This arrangement not only meant that equipment and help was available for excavation work, but also there was every opportunity to discuss in detail the problems of Mesolithic Morton. It must be remembered that at Morton Farm a new phase in local archaeology was being investigated. Finally, to the members of the Archaeological Section of the Abertay Historical Society, to Mr Daniel Henderson, F.S.A. Scot., to Mr Robert Crerar, and to Mr Brendan Flynn, gratitude and thanks are due for their willing assistance.

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MICROLITHS EXCAVATED FROM MORTON FARM . 1963.



FABRICATION OF MICROLITHS.

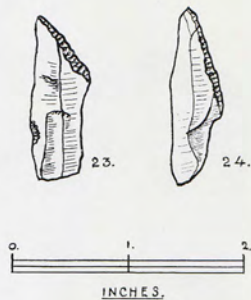


FIG. 2

FLINT INDUSTRY FROM MORTON FARM. 1963.

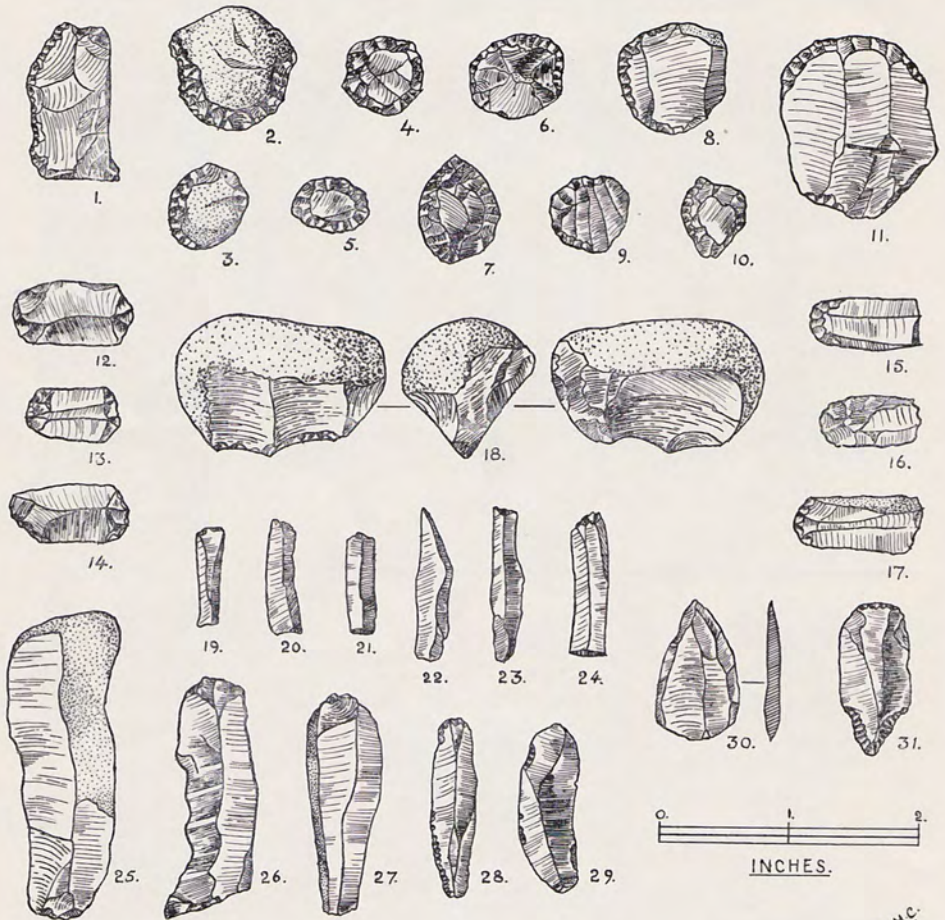


FIG. 3

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